



## BIO 2019

Daughters of actress Florez Sledge and Broadway tap dancer Edwin Sledge, four sisters from Philly; **Debbie, Joni, Kim and Kathy**, were never short of creative inspiration growing up. Fed on a rich diet of music and culture, the girls were taught to sing by their dear grandmother **Viola Beatrix Williams**, an acclaimed opera soprano. They soon formed a multi-lead vocal group charmingly known as "Mrs. Williams Granddaughters", and began performing at church events and local clubs. Inspiration struck one evening when the quartet were accidentally announced as "The Sisters Sledge" and Sister Sledge, was duly born!

Experiencing early chart success with the 1974 single **Love Don't You Go Through No Changes on Me**, juggling school life with tour life soon became the norm for the sisters and their manager mom. International acclaim soon beckoned and the Philly four found themselves adventuring to countries as far afield as Japan for the **Tokyo Music Festival**, and Zaire, Africa to perform at the legendary **Rumble in the Jungle** boxing event. Little did they know this was but a taste of the worldwide fame they were soon to experience...

1979's **We are Family** propelled the group in to the musical stratosphere. Produced by **Nile Rodgers** and **Bernard Edwards** of the Chic Organization, the iconic album is widely acknowledged to have birthed some of the greatest dancefloor anthems of all time! **He's the Greatest Dancer**, **Lost in Music** and **Thinking of You** are universally loved songs springing from the golden age of dance music. The album's seminal title track **We are Family** became a worldwide smash. The song was consequently shared across the planet as a joyful celebration of connection and togetherness, including by The World Champion Pittsburgh Pirates who adopted it as their anthem during the World Series.

Now icons of music and fashion, the group embarked on a worldwide tour of wildly energetic shows that lasted for 3 years, refining their craft as first-rate performers. Showcasing their own brand of energetic 80's groove, the **All-American Girls** enjoyed further chart success with producer **Narada Michael Walden** and their self-produced album **The Sisters**. In 1985, the single **Frankie** remained at number 1 in the UK for 4 weeks and was a certified Gold hit.

In 1989 with her sisters blessing, Kathy left the group and the trio thereafter enjoyed further success in Europe with the single **World Rise and Shine**. Their acclaimed 9<sup>th</sup> studio album **African Eyes** was written and produced by Joni Sledge and nominated for a **GRAMMY** as Best Produced CD. In December 2000, the Sledges were invited to perform for **the Clintons** at **The White House**. The sisters continued to tour the world and in 2004 braved stormy weather to sing to 150,000 on the pyramid stage at the UK's famed **Glastonbury** festival.

In 2015, Sister Sledge were honored to be invited to perform for **Pope Francis** in their home town Philadelphia at the **World Meeting of Families**, alongside **Andrea Bocelli** and the late **Aretha Franklin**. The following year, the ladies marched with **Annie Lennox** at the annual **Walk in her Shoes** charity event and performed new music at the WOW (Women of the World) festival in London.

Tragically, **Joni Sledge** passed away in 2017. Today founding members **Debbie and Kim Sledge** continue to perform as Sister Sledge and honor Joni's strength, talent and spirit on stage with their amazing band, thankful for the lasting impact Joni undoubtedly made in the world. Realizing the power of their platform, philanthropic ambitions have also shaped the present for the duo. In 2018, the **Nothing is Greater than Love** charity foundation was set up in Joni's memory, as a resource to empower women and fund under-privileged young people in Arts-based education.

Over the years, Sister Sledge has amassed a string of Gold and Platinum records, accumulating total sales of over **15,000,000** worldwide. They have earned over **100 awards and commendations**, garnering **GRAMMY** Nominations for Record of the Year and Best R&B Duo or group, along the way.